IN THE CLAIMS

The claims are pending as follows:

1. (Original) A tag management server for providing tag management information corresponding to tag information read from an ID tag in response to an inquiry using said tag information, comprising:

a database for storing tag management information corresponding to respective ID tags; wherein:

said tag management server judges whether said inquiry is legitimate or not, based on tag information corresponding to an ID tag managed by said tag management server;

said tag management server retrieves tag management information corresponding to said tag information used in said legitimate inquiry from said database; and

when said corresponding tag management information is retrieved, said tag management server supplies said tag management information to an inquirer, and when said inquiry is not legitimate or when corresponding tag management information is not retrieved, said tag management server gives a notice of the fact to said inquirer.

2. (Original) A tag management server according to Claim 1, wherein:

said tag management information includes, for every managed ID tag, a maker and a trade name of an article provided with said ID tag.

3. (Withdrawn) An information acquiring/utilizing system comprising:

a portable terminal for reading tag information from an ID tag provided in an article via radio waves;

a tag management server; and

an item management server; wherein:

said portable terminal makes an inquiry to said tag management server on the basis of tag information read from said ID tag, while said tag management server supplies corresponding tag management information to said portable terminal in response to said inquiry from said portable

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terminal; and

said portable terminal makes an inquiry to said item management server on the basis of said tag management information acquired from said tag management server, while said item management server supplies said portable terminal, in response to said inquiry from said portable terminal, with item information about an article provided with said ID tag from which said portable terminal acquires said tag information.

4. (Withdrawn) An information acquiring/utilizing system according to Claim 3, wherein:
said portable terminal includes an antenna having directivity for reading tag information from said ID tag.

5. (Withdrawn) An information acquiring/utilizing system according to Claim 3, wherein:
said portable terminal includes a non-directional antenna for reading tag information from said ID tag.

6. (Withdrawn) An information acquiring/utilizing system according to Claim 5, wherein:
said portable terminal includes an operating button for reading tag information from said ID tag, and when said operating button is operated, said portable terminal reads tag information of said ID tag existing within a predetermined distance for a predetermined time.

7. (Withdrawn) An information acquiring/utilizing system according to Claim 5, wherein:
said portable terminal includes an operating button for reading tag information from said ID tag, and said portable terminal reads tag information of said ID tag existing within a predetermined distance during a period when said operating button is in an operating state.